

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Spectrum Communications Overhead Fiber Optic Cable Cascade County
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	August 2020
<b>Proponent:</b>	Spectrum Pacific West LLC
<b>Location:</b>	20N 3E S23, Lots 1 & 4
<b>County:</b>	Cascade
<b>Trust:</b>	Common Schools

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Spectrum Pacific West LLC is proposing to install new aerial overhead communication facilities to upgrade their current facilities and services Great Falls, MT to Cascade, MT. The new aerial cable facilities are planned to be attached to aerial infrastructure (pole line) that is already in place. These improvements will allow Spectrum to offer state-of-the-art communication broadband services.

The proposed easement would span across State owned surface and navigable river bottom under the Missouri River.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)  
Northeastern Land Office (NELO)  
Central Land Office (CLO)

Proponent: Spectrum Pacific West LLC

Surface Lessees: Jean & Joseph Jaques  
Riverside Townhomes Leaseholders, LLC

Other: Cascade County Conservation District  
US Army Corps of Engineers

#### 2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The DNRC, and CLO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

The proponent contacted the Cascade Conservation District and their response to the proposed project is, "The placement of aerial lines over the Missouri River using poles and line already in place does not require a 310 permit".

The proponent also contacted the US Army Corps of Engineers and has received their authorization to proceed with the proposed project. Please see the attached US Army Corps of Engineers 404 – NWP 12 Letter.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all necessary permits for the proposed project and settling all surface damages with the surface lessees.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Alternative A (No Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant permission for the proponent to install an overhead communications cable to existing aerial infrastructure (pole line).

**Alternative B (the Proposed Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission for the proponent to install an overhead communications cable to existing aerial infrastructure (pole line).

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

#### 4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

*Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.*

The project area should not see much impact to soils from the proposed project. The communications cable is proposed to be installed on existing pole structures and is not anticipated to disturb the ground surface.

The only disturbance that may occur would be from the use of heavy equipment to install the new communications cable. All of the soils in the proposed area are rated at low to medium for soil compactibility risk. Because of this rating the proponent will have to keep the traffic to necessary vehicles only to reduce the compaction. Due to the short-term nature of cable installation there will likely be very little compaction even with heavier traffic.

No significant cumulative impacts to geology or soil quality, stability, and moisture are anticipated.

#### 5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.*

The proposed project consists of the installation of an upgraded cable to existing pole structures and will not include any new pole installation within the Missouri River corridor. The proponent has contacted both the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Cascade Conservation District. Both have given written permission to proceed with the proposed project as described.

Due to the nature of the proposed project, no significant impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution are anticipated.

#### 6. AIR QUALITY:

*What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.*

There may be short-term isolated impacts from the construction equipment exhaust that is used to install the new transmission line. No significant adverse impacts to air quality are expected by implementing the proposed action.

#### 7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.*

The project area consists of a residential area with mainly introduced grass species covering the ground surface. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database identified the four vegetation species of

concern known to be in the area: Chaffweed, Many-headed Sedge, Pale-yellow Jewel-weed, and Foxtail Muhly. None of these species were observed during the site visit conducted by Jocee Hedrick, Lewistown Unit Manager, on Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Spectrum Pacific West LLC will be responsible for reclaiming all disturbed areas on the Trust land once installation is complete. If re-seeding is necessary the proponent will acquire certified, weed free seed and refer to the Plant Materials Tech Note No. MT-46 (Rev. 4) dated September 2013 for seeding rates.

No significant long-term adverse impacts to vegetative cover, quantity or quality are expected as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

#### **8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:**

*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

The proposed project consists of upgrading a communications cable on existing pole structures.

No significant impacts to terrestrial, avian, or aquatic habitats are anticipated.

#### **9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**

*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database identified one reptile and one bird species known to be in the area of the proposed project: The Spiny Softshell and the Great Blue Heron.

Both species may be temporarily displaced during construction for a short period of time. After construction has been completed, no longer term significant adverse impacts to these two species are anticipated. The installation of the communications cable will be on an existing pole line structure and will only add to the cables already existing on the pole line structure. The proposed project will not create a new aerial obstacle for the local bird species.

No significant impacts to unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources are anticipated, though temporary displacement of local wildlife may occur during the project.

#### **10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

On 8 June 2020, NELO Lewistown Unit Manager Jocee Hedrick performed a site inspection of the proposed project area. No historic or cultural resources were noted during the field inspection.

No significant effects on historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources anticipated.

#### **11. AESTHETICS:**

*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

The proposed project consists of upgrading a communications cable on existing pole structures.

No significant impacts to the aesthetics of the area are anticipated.

**12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**

*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

No significant adverse impacts to environmental resources of land, water, air or energy are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

**13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**

*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed in this EA Checklist.

**IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION**

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

There will be some risk to human health and safety associated with the construction of this project and the operation of equipment. It is the proponent's responsibility to mitigate the risks associated with construction.

**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

This project will add to the commercial and residential activities in the area by providing higher speed and more reliable internet access to the local community.

**16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:**

*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.*

The project will not create or eliminate any jobs, so no significant effects to the employment market are anticipated.

**17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:**

*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

**18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:**

*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services*

There may be some additional traffic near the project area during construction, but these increases to traffic will be short term.

No significant impacts to demand for government services are anticipated.

**19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:**

*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

Implementation of the proposed alternative will not conflict with any locally adopted plans.

**20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:**

*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

There will be no significant direct or cumulative effects on access to or quality of recreation and wilderness activities because of this project.

**21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:**

*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing*

The proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be significantly impacted by the proposal.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

The proposed project will have no significant impact on any culturally unique quality of the area.

**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**

*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

The University of Montana will benefit by getting a one-time fee of \$4713.80 (0.481 acres x \$9,800/acre) for the Easement area across State owned surface acres. The Common Schools Trust will benefit by receiving a one-time fee of \$1568.00 (0.32 acres X \$9,800/acre X 50%) for the Easement area across the Missouri River.

**V. FINDING****25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

**Alternative B (the Proposed Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission for the proponent to install an overhead communications cable to existing aerial infrastructure (pole line).

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined no significant impact to the environment because of this project.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

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EIS

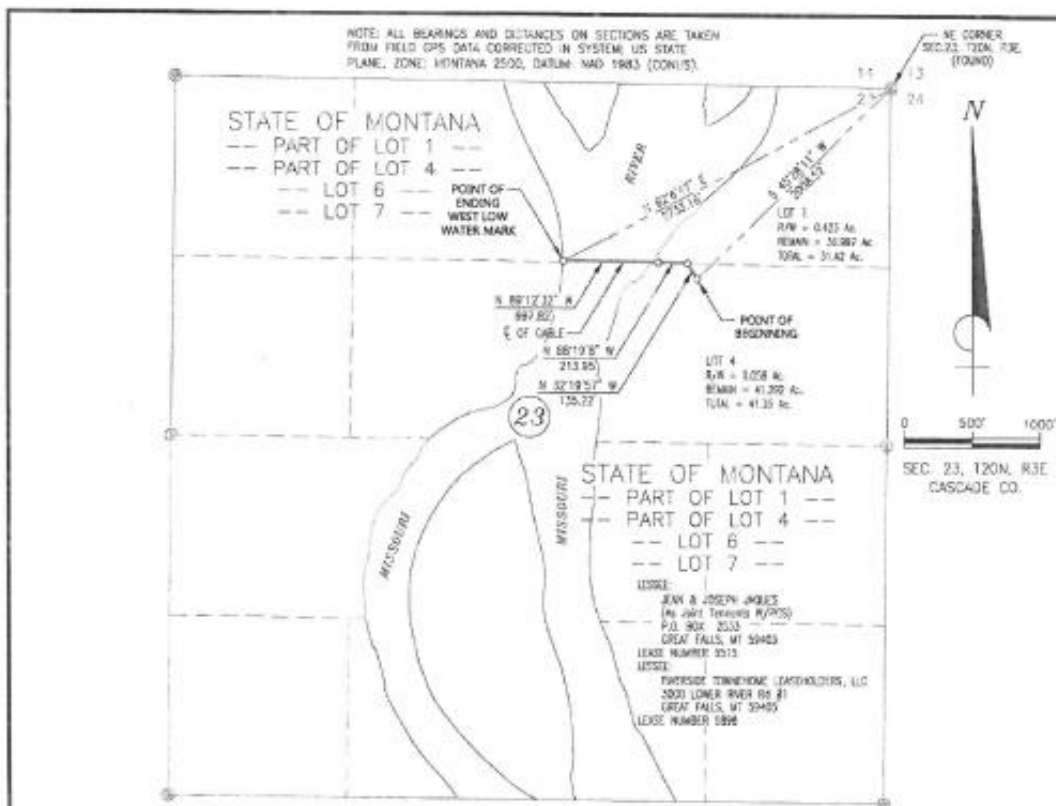
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More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Jocee Hedrick <b>Title:</b> Lewistown Unit Manager
<b>Signature:</b>	 <b>Date:</b> 06/11/2020
<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Heidi Crum <b>Title:</b> Helena Unit Manager, Central Land Office
<b>Signature:</b>	 <b>Date:</b> 6/16/20



#### DESCRIPTION

A RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR AN OVERHEAD COMMUNICATION CABLE EXTENDING TWENTY (20.0) FEET IN WIDTH WITH TEN (10.0) FEET ON EACH SIDE OF A CENTERLINE ALL WITHIN LOT 1 AND LOT 4 OF SECTION 23, TOWNSHIP 20 NORTH, RANGE 3 EAST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 23; THENCE SOUTH 45°28'11" WEST A DISTANCE OF 2008.52 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE; THENCE ON AND ALONG THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE ON A BEARING OF NORTH 32°19'57" WEST A DISTANCE OF 135.22 FEET; THENCE NORTH 88°19'8" WEST A DISTANCE OF 213.95 FEET; THENCE NORTH 89°12'32" WEST A DISTANCE OF 697.82 FEET TO THE POINT OF ENDING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE AND WEST LOW WATER MARK OF THE MISSOURI RIVER; THENCE NORTH 62°6'47" EAST A DISTANCE OF 2733.16 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 23.

CONTAINED WITHIN THE ABOVE DESCRIBED NEW CONSTRUCTION RIGHT-OF-WAY IS 0.481 ACRES MORE OR LESS.

EXHIBIT of RIGHT-OF-WAY on STATE LAND  
 Sec. 23, T 20 N, R 3 E, P.M.M.  
 CASCADE CO.

SPECTRUM PACIFIC WEST, LLC  
 ST. LOUIS, MO

CHARTER\_23203.DWG